coloration was also visible in the scapulars of the Salt Lake City specimen (Fig. 2).

In summary, although the two sibling specimens and the Salt Lake City specimen were reported to hatch from eggs laid by a female Wood Duck, they show a predominance of Mandarin features, as well as a few inexplicable plumage characteristics. To consider them as aberrant Mandarins having intersex or sex mosaic features would not only require that the maternal parent was incorrectly identified, but also that they all suffered the same genetic "accident", the probability of which seems remote. The history of the museum specimen is unknown, but it corresponds to the two sibling specimens in its measurements and some of its plumage characteristics. If, as Mr. Wilson suggests, paternal characterisitics tend to be expressed in the hybrids, the mounted specimen may represent the reciprocal cross involving a male Wood Duck. None of the living specimens have shown any indication of sexual activity, and it thus is unlikely that they will prove to be fertile.

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The occurrence of *Certhia familiaris macrodactyla* C. L. Brehm in the British Isles

by James Harrison

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Considering the frequent and regular occurrences of the Continental race of the Great Tit, *Parus major major*, and Blue Tit, *Parus caeruleus caeruleus* in the British Isles, it is surprising how very infrequent are the visits of the nominate form of the Tree Creeper, *Certhia familiaris familiaris* by comparison, while there have been no positive records of any other race of the

species than the nominate. Up to 1952, the date of the publication of the *Check List of the Birds of Great Britain and Ireland*, there were only two records of this form for England and five for Scotland.

Since then what was apparently an immigrant Tree Creeper was noted in the *Dungeness Bird Observatory Report* (1957, p.18), as follows:

'298 Tree Creeper: a pale bird trapped on 10th October was not of the race *Certhia familiaris britannica* nor of the (sub)species *C. brachydactyla* (Short-toed Tree Creeper).

From the full description taken, it was not possible safely to ascribe the bird to *C. f. familiaris* (Northern) nor to *C. f. macrodactyla* (intermediate). A first record of this species for the observatory.'

Another instance of what would appear to have been an immigrant Tree Creeper is to be found recorded in the *Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Report* 1964–65, p.39 as follows: '298 Tree Creeper, 1964. One on 5th September, (J.N.H.)'

Differentation of the several races of *Certhia familiaris* entails a critical comparison of the various geographical forms, and this is also necessary in order to distinguish the two species, *viz: familiaris* and *brachydactyla*, and it should be noted that on rare occasions individuals of *familiaris* can even show a dusky carpal spot on the under surface of the wing.

When recently going through a series of this species collected in England, an individual was found which was conspicuously different from all the others in the series which are remarkably uniform.

This bird is a female, and was collected by myself on 10th October, 1919 in the St. Helens Wood, Hastings, Sussex. When compared with examples of the nominate race, it is seen to be browner above, while when viewed against examples of the indigenous race, *C. f. britannica* it is distinctly paler above. On the rump this individual is somewhat paler russet, though less pale in this region than is the nominate bird. In fact this individual is clearly intermediate in its characters between the British and nominate forms.

The underparts are far whiter than those of the British race, and the buffish wash on the flanks and under tail-coverts is also paler and less extensive. However, it is less pure white than is the Northern Tree Creeper, *C. f. familiaris*.

Racially most forms of this species are well defined, but with *C. f. macrodactyla* while sufficiently well differentiated in the series, individuals can be met with in British taken specimens which approach rather closely to this European form.

The only helpful structural character is the bill measurement, which in *C. f. macrodactyla* is longer than in the British form, while it is worth mentioning that the majority of specimens collected in the Bernese Oberland are amongst the longest billed individuals of this race, though this finding is not absolute. In them the bill variation, as measured from the skull, is from 16–20 mm.

The specimen was compared with examples from Russia, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, France (Central Pyrenees), and Switzerland (Bernese Oberland) and has a bill measurement of 18.5 mm.

However, it is undoubtedly on the general characters that a determination is to be made, because in a sufficiently large series individuals will be

met with in which the bill measurement will be found to be unreliable as a decisive character as there is some overlap in this measurement in the three forms discussed.

The name of the Grey Sunbird

by P. A. Clancey

Received 16th April, 1968

The sombre Grey or Mouse-coloured Sunbird *Nectarinia veroxii* of the littoral of south-eastern and eastern Africa was originally described as *Cinnyris Veroxii* by Dr. Andrew Smith (1831). The species was proposed on a specimen from Cafferland presented to Smith by M. Jules Verreaux. Prior to 1831, Smith had been the Superintendent of the South African Museum, Cape Town, in which institution Verreaux was employed in the capacity of taxidermist [Kirby (1965)]. Some years later, Smith again used the same unorthodox spelling of Verreaux's name in describing *Mus Veroxii* Smith, 1834, and *Otis Veroxii* Smith, 1836. These obvious misspellings of Verreaux's name strike a discordant note, because a survey of most of Smith's ornithological writings in the Willughy Society's reprints (1880) shows that he was otherwise meticulous in his employment of dedicatory names, using the honoured person's name unaltered in any way, only adding the single or double terminal i as the case warranted. Smith's use of *veroxii* instead of *verreauxii* is quite evidently intentional, and perhaps stems from a play on the name Verreaux and the Latin word *ferox*, ardent, fierce or warlike. Historical literature does not tell us if Jules Verreaux was particularly belligerent by nature or overtly ardent in his museum duties, though the possibility exists that Smith considered him to possess such traits.

Delacour (1944) has already corrected the name of the Grey Sunbird to *verreauxi* (*i*), though he has not been followed in this action by more recent workers. Years before Delacour wrote, Sherborn (1932) suggested that *veroxii* should become *verreauxi* (*i*). In the case of the rodent named *veroxii*, I note that Ellerman *et al.* (1953) use the corrected version, in the combination *Rattus verreauxi* A. Smith.

I believe that, in agreement with Sherborn, Delacour and the mammalogists, the name of the Grey Sunbird should actually be corrected from *N. veroxii* to *N. verreauxii*. However, Article 32 (a) of the *International Code* (1961), dealing with the correct original spelling of names, is quite explicit on an issue such as the one under consideration. Subsection (ii) states that the original spelling of a name is to be retained unless "there is in the original publication clear evidence of an inadvertent error, such as a lapsus calami, or a copyist's or printer's error (incorrect transliteration, improper latinization, and use of an inappropriate connecting vowel are not to be considered inadvertent errors)". As Smith used *veroxii* for three different taxa in three different publications in three different years no *lapsus calami* or inadvertent error occurred in the naming of *Cinnyris Veroxii*.

Veroxii is clearly a deliberately effected incorrect transliteration of the name Verreaux, but under the terms of Article 32 of the International Code a correction of the name to *verreauxii* is inadmissible.